United Nations A/71/156

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 July 2016
English
Original: Arabic, English, French

Seventy-first session
Item 104 of the provisional agenda*
Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/71/150.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 70/72, commended the Mediterranean countries for their efforts in meeting common challenges through coordinated overall responses, based on a spirit of multilateral partnership, towards the general objective of turning the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchanges and cooperation, guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity, encouraged them to strengthen such efforts through, inter alia, a lasting multilateral and action-oriented cooperative dialogue among States of the region, and recognized the role of the United Nations in promoting regional and international peace and security.

2. The General Assembly recognized that the elimination of the economic and social disparities in levels of development and other obstacles, as well as respect and greater understanding among cultures in the Mediterranean area, would contribute to enhancing peace, security and cooperation among Mediterranean countries through the existing forums.

3. The General Assembly called upon all States of the Mediterranean region that had not yet done so to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, thus creating the conditions necessary for strengthening peace and cooperation in the region. The Assembly encouraged all States of the region to favour the conditions necessary for strengthening the confidence-building measures among them by promoting genuine openness and transparency on all military matters, by participating, inter alia, in the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures and by providing accurate data and information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

4. The General Assembly encouraged the Mediterranean countries to strengthen further their cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the possible resort by terrorists to weapons of mass destruction, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and in combating international crime and illicit arms transfers and illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking, which pose a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the region and therefore to the improvement of the current political, economic and social situation and which jeopardize friendly relations among States, hinder the development of international cooperation and result in the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the democratic basis of pluralistic society.

5. Furthermore, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report at its seventy-first session on means to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. The present report is submitted in compliance with that request and on the basis of information received from Member States.

6. In this connection, a note verbale dated 4 March 2016 was sent to all Member States requesting their views on the subject. The replies received are contained in section II below. Additional replies will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Governments

Algeria

[Original: French]
[13 July 2016]

The problem of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region must be seen in a global context, one that takes account of the human, political, security and economic interests and concerns of the countries on both shores of the Mediterranean, by promoting initiatives designed to make the region a zone of lasting peace, stability and prosperity.

Algeria has an active Mediterranean policy, based on the principles of friendship and cooperation, good neighbourliness and mutual respect. It calls for the promotion and implementation of these principles.

For Algeria, Mediterranean security and development are very closely linked to peace, security and development in Africa. It stresses the importance of integrating the Mediterranean dimension in the consideration of the future of the security system in Europe, with a view to safeguarding the interests of all concerned. It is on this basis that Algeria takes an active role in several initiatives and dialogue frameworks under way in the region:

(a) The Algerian initiative to combat terrorism in the Sahel is designed to confront the current worrisome situation, whose effects on security and stability in Africa are considerable. It is designed to strengthen the strategic, operational and military framework, launch socioeconomic development programmes, and build the administrative, technical and operational capacities of the security personnel of several African countries.

(b) The Western Mediterranean Forum (5+5 Dialogue) has fostered the adoption of cooperative measures in several areas, the consolidation of collective peace and security in the Mediterranean, and engagement with the issues affecting peace and security in the region.

(c) The Office of the CBRN Centre of Excellence for the North African and Sahel region aims to promote cooperation among the countries of the region, on the one hand, and of the European Union, on the other, to reduce the risks arising from the illicit use of sensitive materials.

(d) The African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism makes important contributions with regard to combating terrorism and related topics. It is an outgrowth of the desire of African States to coordinate their efforts to implement concrete, urgent and collective counter-terrorism measures with those of the international community.

(e) The African Mechanism for Police Cooperation is a tool of regional coordination whose purpose is to strengthen peace and security in Africa through building the capacities of the police forces of African countries in the areas of scientific policing, criminal threat assessment, combating cybercrime, and combating the illicit traffic in arms and drugs, as well as consolidating the police forces deployed in connection with peacekeeping operations.

Jordan

[Original: Arabic]
[3 May 2016]

1. Jordan fully supports General Assembly resolution 70/72 on strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region, as well as other General Assembly resolutions on that subject, including resolutions 65/90 of 2010 and 66/63 of 2011. It has also consistently sought to foster cooperation and security in the Mediterranean region, with a view to establishing peace and stability in that area.

2. Jordan welcomes all efforts to strengthen cooperation in the Mediterranean region aimed at countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, preventing terrorists from using weapons of mass destruction and combating organized crime and illicit arms trafficking. Jordan has been a regional leader in acceding to international instruments and supporting international initiatives concerning counter-terrorism, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and international crime. Following are some of those instruments and initiatives:

- United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
- Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects
- Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
- Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
- Chemical Weapons Convention
- Biological Weapons Convention
- Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection
- Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism
- Proliferation Security Initiative
- International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

3. Jordan believes that peace and stability in the Mediterranean region is of vital importance and a fundamental requirement for the economic and social development of all peoples of the region, inasmuch as such development will contribute significantly to regional stability and peace. Jordan supports the efforts of the United Nations aimed at strengthening confidence-building measures and promoting transparency at the regional and international levels, with a view to establishing peace and security throughout the world.

4. Jordan abides by all Security Council resolutions concerning weapons of mass destruction, disarmament and the suppression of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Transparency in armaments is essential to establishing a climate of trust and cooperation in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East. Jordan has therefore consistently urged the States of the region to respect United Nations resolutions and bilateral, regional and international instruments, and to accede to international instruments concerning arms control and non-proliferation, with a view to establishing peace and security throughout the world, in particular in the Mediterranean and Middle East regions.

5. Jordan maintains close relations with the States of the Mediterranean region based on cooperation and common security, with a view to establishing peace and security in the region and eliminating the causes of tension and the consequent threat to regional and international peace and security. Jordan has been a regional leader in acceding to international instruments concerning arms control and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, with the aim of establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The establishment of such a zone would help to transform the Mediterranean region into an area of peace, democracy, cooperation and economic prosperity, and thereby help to address the causes of poverty, unemployment and tensions that could give rise to terrorism and undermine regional stability. Jordan affirms the need to respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries of the Mediterranean and the right of peoples to defend themselves and exercise self-determination, as well as the principles of non-interference, non-use of force or threat of use of force and the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, in accordance with the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

6. All countries of the Mediterranean region should make a greater, more concerted effort to strengthen economic, social and cultural cooperation, particularly given the presence of terrorist organizations in the region and the influx of large numbers of migrants to many neighbouring States and to Jordan, which is bearing the burden of hosting the Syrian refugees despite its meagre resources. The international community must help Jordan and provide it with the assistance it needs to deal with the Syrian refugee crisis. Such cooperation should be based on a spirit of partnership and a desire to transform the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchange and cooperation, thus ensuring peace, stability and prosperity for the States of the region.

Portugal

[Original: English]
[31 May 2016]

At its seventieth session, the General Assembly, recalling its previous resolutions adopted on this issue, reaffirmed the importance of cooperation among the Mediterranean countries as a fundamental way to ensure peace, security, stability and development in the region, which includes countries in Europe, the Maghreb and the Middle East.

Portugal has been involved in the cooperation process with the Mediterranean countries, namely, in defence matters, through its active participation in projects that have contributed to strengthening the relations among European countries and those of the Middle East. On this subject, European and Mediterranean Area Securities and the Barcelona process should be mentioned, as well as the Union for the Mediterranean, of which Portugal is a member, and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, two processes in which Portugal is actively engaged.

Portugal also participates in the Western Mediterranean Forum (5+5 Dialogue). Its actions regarding military cooperation, security issues and civil emergencies involve 10 countries from the Mediterranean region: Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia.

Through the European Union, Portugal has also been involved in different programmes in the Sahel region on arms controls, which foresee, among other things, the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons.

Portugal offered one of its planes to ensure the safety and security of the American vessel *Cape Ray* during the destruction on board of Syrian chemical weapons that took place in the Mediterranean Sea.

Portugal has been involved with regional partners in several areas of disarmament in order to strengthen safety and security in the Mediterranean region.